

Hillandale

News

No 202 February 1995



MECHANICAL MUSIC

Tuesday 23 May 1995



An H.M.V. Model 551 sold recently at auction for £1900.

Phillips hold regular sales of Mechanical Music and related items throughout the year. Entries are currently being accepted for inclusion in our sales throughout 1994.

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Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded in 1919

Patrons: Oliver Berliner and Kathleen Darby



President: George Frow

Chairman: Dr Peter Martland

Editor: Chris Hamilton, [REDACTED] Cupar, Fife KY15 4EP

Secretary: Suzanne Lewis, [REDACTED] Chesham, Bucks HP5 3JB

Treasurer: Chris Hamilton, [REDACTED] Cupar, Fife KY15 4EP

Tel: [REDACTED]

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (1994/95): U.K. and Europe - £12 per annum

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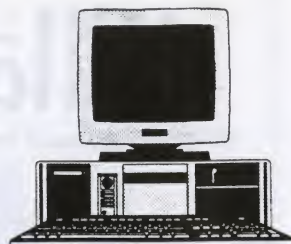
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Front cover illustration: The Comedian Harmonists, see Book Reviews
(Photograph by courtesy of Dr Peter Czada)

EDITOR'S DESK



Annual Subscriptions

The Treasurer has reminded me that the 1995/96 subscriptions are due on the first day of March 1995. Please would you help him by renewing your subscription promptly. By doing so you will help to contain the administration costs of the Society and you will also ensure that you continue to receive *Hillandale News* without interruption.

King George VI

Joe Pengelly's article *Was King George VI a Gramophone Buff?* in the last edition has prompted the intrepid Frank Andrews to conduct some research into the Repeating Gramophone Company Ltd. He has come up trumps and his article *The Repeating Gramophone Co. Ltd.* published in this issue reveals some fascinating facts about this obscure company.

London Meeting 16th February 1995

Peter Copeland will be telling us about his researches into the speeds that old records were recorded at. This is a subject close to the heart of many an enthusiast of old records and I am sure those present will be in for a few surprises. Do come and join us on this date. I am sure the visit will reap rewards.

Extraordinary General Meeting 16th March 1995

I would remind members that this meeting is being held to approve the necessary resolutions to ensure the smooth transfer of the Society into a Company Limited by Guarantee and its change to charitable status.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.**

Hence the deadline for the **April** issue will be **15th February 1995.**

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

THE BRITISH RECORD INDUSTRY DURING THE REIGN OF KING EDWARD VII: 1901 - 1910

by Frank Andrews

Part 4

1906 - More Developments and Failures

The Lambert Co. Ltd., which had already gone into voluntary liquidation in August 1905, continued in business, independently, until January 1906. The directors of the business were in the process of forming The General Phonograph Co., and continued selling old stock *Indestructibles* and two more releases of *Rex Records* (the last coming in February) when the General Company was registered as a limited company. The new company, with its works at Euston Buildings and a factory at Globe Row, Bow, London E. continued advertising *Lambert Records* and machines into the early summer of 1906. The Lambert Company's business was eventually sold to The General Phonograph Co. Ltd. In the summer, James White, the ex-European manager for National Phonograph Company Ltd., took a controlling interest in **The General Phonograph Co. Ltd.** and introduced the *White Gold Moulded Cylinder* to the market, in September 1906, for the forthcoming 1906-1907 season. All the former *The Rex Records* were sold off at give-away prices by a dealer who bought the stock.

In the meanwhile, the *Star Gold Moulded* records had their last advertisements in April. The partnership, trading as The Phonograph Exchange Company, was dissolved in June 1906.

Another new cylinder record in 1906 was *The London Popular Record* priced at only 4s. 6d. per dozen from the Electro-Mechani-

cal Engineering Works. The business which, were suppliers of everything necessary for recording and making cylinder records, also advertised in the U.S.A.'s *Talking Machine World*.

During 1906, The National Phonograph Co. Ltd. (Edison Records) introduced its American recorded *Grand Opera Series* on two-minute records against the competition of operatic discs of three- or four-minute duration from Columbia, Fonotopia, Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd., and Odeon recordings.

Another indestructible record was being advertised in 1906 by the **Universal Indestructible Record Company**. This company, it is almost certain, was the third concern to become proprietors of the original Indestructible Company's stock-in-trade.

1906 - "The Germans Are Coming So They Say" (Harry Bedford's Music Hall Song)

1906 witnessed significant developments in the disc market in Britain. During 1905 the Neophone Co. Ltd. had been reformed twice, firstly as **Neophone (1905) Ltd.** then as **Neophone Limited**. At the start of 1906 the following priced discs were on sale (all made by the white enamel process on compressed card): single-sided 20" size at 10s. 6d.; 12" size Grand Opera (Autographed) at 5s.; Grand Opera at 2s.; Standard (with metal rims) 1s. 6d.; Standard 1s.; 9" size Grand Opera (Autographed) at 2s. 6d., Grand Opera 1s. and Standard at 6d. The metric sizes of 19cm and 27cm were no longer advertised. Neophone never had a 10" disc.

In June 1906, a new double-sided recorded Neophone disc was presented to the market, priced at 3s., which was made of an entirely new black material called *Neolite*. By September, only they and the 9" white single-side recorded discs, and the 20" white discs were advertised, together with the large double-sided recorded disc and priced at 25s.

[Burt Earle, banjo, on a Neolite Neophone, played part of *Dance California*.]

The business of Nicole Frères Ltd. failed in 1906, not because of its business in Nicole records, of both kinds, nor its Nicole machines, but through the failure of the musical box side of the business. With its sole sales agent out of business, the Nicole Record Co. Ltd. had to close down. One of its directors acquired the machinery and stock and opened up as **The Disc Record Co. Ltd.** in Stockport, Cheshire, from where pressings of Nicole Records were available at least until the close of 1906.

The Disc Record Co. Ltd. was one of the first businesses to produce what were to become known as stencilled discs - they were discs pressed from extant masters with labels other than the original. From the Nicoles, early on, came discs labelled Empire Record, Royal Record and Universal Record, some made in the unbreakable mode of the Nicole, but others pressed in solid stock materials. The Disc Record Co. Ltd. continued to supply Nicole Frères (India) Ltd. with its discs. The last records to be listed by Nicole Frères Ltd. and the last to be made by the Nicole Record Co. Ltd. were advertised in March 1906.

The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. throughout the year continued with its Gramophone Monarch, Gramophone Concert and Gramophone Records, although new issues of the latter (the 7" size) were released only in January and February. The advice that the 7" discs were available appeared in the bi-monthly catalogues until

the end of the year after which they ceased to be mentioned.

The discs continued in the single-side format as were the Zonophone Records in the 7" and 10" sizes put out by Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.'s British Zonophone Company, but with *International Zonophone Company* on the labels. Two innovations of 1905 should be mentioned: the first was the sale, in the autumn, of 5" diameter discs in a number of countries as a ploy to attract buyers away from Nicole records. In the light of the poor condition of Nicole Frères Ltd. at that time, this could only have had a minimal effect on Nicole's trading in discs; the second was the production of double-side recorded Zonophone Records containing 40 language lessons for Professor Bizeray's foreign language-courses.

A new British disc record company was registered in April 1906, **Fonotipia Limited**. This company, backed by D'Erlanger's Merchant Banking House of Bishopsgate, London E.C., Harry Higgins, the Director of The Royal Opera Covent Garden, Tito Ricordi of the Ricordi and Co., music score publishers, and some Italian bankers, purchased the business of A. Michaelis, Dino Foa and Umberto Giordano registered in Italy as *The Società Italiana di Fonotipia in Accomandita (Michaelis, Foa and Company)*, Milano, which became the Italian branch of the British company. It did however retain its own Italian corporate existence and undertook the contracting of most of the Italian artistes in continuance of its former activities. An innovative feature of its discs in 1905 had been the introduction of single-sided recorded 35cm (13³/₄") which, being recorded and pressed by the Odeon engineers and Berlin factory, reflected the same type of disc which Odeon itself had introduced, Odeon in Germany being the German agency for the Fonotipia discs. In Paris, Ullmann Frères acted in a similar capacity for France in both the Odeon and

Fonotipia records. Ullmann's were also the contracting agency for French artistes' recordings. By the time the new 1906-1907 season arrived, some Fonotipia discs were being pressed at the Crystalate Works in Kent.

From America, Victor recordings were still coming through on Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.'s discs, with a few further issues of the blue American Odeon Records (American Record Company) coming from Ullmann's *Odeon Disc Record Co.* which issued a complete catalogue in April 1906 under the title of *Blue Odeon Duplex Records*. The catalogue listed 121 discs including 6 Italian operatic arias by M. E. Colli, and 4 Hawaiian recordings by the Royal Hawaiian Troubadours, one of which became quite a best seller by another artist in the 1930s, *Tommi Tommi* on Parlophone.

The Columbia Phonograph Co. Gen'l., at the beginning of the year, was still receiving its discs from America, pressed at Bridgeport, Connecticut, where the British masters were sent for processing. In the summer of 1906 the cylinder making factory at Earlsfield came on stream. It now became the turn of the American parent company to send to the British factory its American masters which were to be released through the British and Continental catalogues. In addition recordings from European centres began to be sent to Earlsfield too.

With the new pressing facility, the former black and silver labelled *Columbia Phonograph Co. Gen'l.* discs were supplanted by a new label in dark green and gold styled *Columbia Graphophone Record*. The discs remained single-sided recorded. I am unaware if the 7" size was continued with the new label. In September, for the new 1906-1907 season, Columbia introduced its new 12" discs. Those had darkish blue labels with an "Awards Ribbon", which was red, white and blue, arcing across the label with the discs details printed in gold. It was

styled simply Columbia Record. At first all were from the American 30,000 number series. Columbia had introduced a few strict dance tempo records in a 14" size, all to be found in the Society's reprinted October 1904 catalogue.

[Columbia Graphophone Record 1754, an American matrix, was played, being the Columbia Orchestra (U.S.A.) in Powell's *Gondolier Intermezzo*.]

Another new American disc to arrive in Britain, in April 1906, was the *Imperial Record*, a product of **Leeds and Catlin** at Middleton, Connecticut. This record was 10" in size and single-side recorded. A sister label, called *Concert Record*, was advertised with the Imperial for the first two months or so. However, no doubt due to representations made by Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. whose own 10" discs were *Gramophone Concert Records* (with a registered trade mark cover), the *Concert Records* disappeared from the advertisements of the London agencies. At least two British artists, Ian Colquhoun and Tom Childs of York Minster were shipped to America to make Imperial Records. Alan Turner also recorded for Leeds and Catlin but he may have already been in America.

The American manufacturers, similar to the American Record Company (Blue Odeons), were already facing summonses for infringements of the American Graphophone Company (Columbia) patents in a suit which dragged on for a number of years. *Imperial Records* were priced at 2s. 6d. with the briefly advertised *Concert Records* priced at 2s.

[Selections from *Cavalleria Rusticana* on Imperial 44868, played by the Imperial Concert Band was demonstrated.]

In Germany, around the time the negotiations were in progress towards taking over Fonotipia, the American founder of the International Talking Machine Co. (Odeon

Records) sold his stockholding in the company he founded to the D'Erlangers. The Ullmann business too withdrew from Prescott's company, its shares also going to the new Fonotipia interests so that the Odeon business in Weissensee became an Anglo/German controlled undertaking, being both the recorders and the manufacturers for Odeon and Fonotipia discs. Arrangements were then made in London with Louis Sterling, manager of the Russell Hunting Record Co. Ltd. (Sterling Records) for his company to take over the agency for both the Odeon and Fonotipia discs, and for one month (August) they advertised the lines. But a new company, **Sterling and Hunter Ltd.**, was formed on the 26th of August especially to become the contracting and British sales agency for the two labels which it did from September 17th for the start of the new season. The Russell

Hunting Record Co. Ltd. had already purchased the Linguaphone languages courses business in May and formed a new from The International Linguaphone Co. Ltd. for which, in August, Sterling and Hunter Ltd. became the advertising and sales agency with Russell Hunting and Co. producing the cylinder records, formerly made by Pathé Frères.

In 1906 Beka Record G.m.b.H. began manufacturing from a new factory in Berlin and for the new 1906-1907 season introduced its 12" *Beka Meister Record* in October, only as double-sided recorded discs at 6s. 6d. During the year the 8" discs ceased to have new issues and the *Beka Record* was then made only as a 7" disc.

[A Beka Meister Record from 1915 was played over, Lenghi-Cellini singing Henry Geehl's *For You Alone* on M 174.]



Leeds & Catlin Concert Record

It was not until the new season was under way, that building on Beka's success in penetrating the British market that the German invasion really began.

The first of three new makes to arrive in September 1906 were the *Favorite Records* from **Schallplatten Fabrik, Favorite Record - G.m.b.H.** These records were in 7", 10" and 12" sizes of discs, with the 12" described as *Royal Favorites*, although that name has not been seen on any label which was royal blue in colour. Favorite Records had been advertised in Germany as early as February 1905. Sold through the **International Favorite Record Co. Ltd.** in London, that business was the trading name for Herr Vischer, a German Merchants Agent at 17, Hatton Garden, E.C. (in spite of the word Limited, it was not a registered "Limited by Shares" company in England). The discs were available as single-sided or double-sided recorded. A complete catalogue was published in October, containing British recordings and, more numerous, recordings from Favorite's already extensive international repertoires. The 7" discs were 2s. for single recordings and 3s. for duplex recordings. In the 12" size the prices were 4s. and 5s. respectively. The catalogue contained British, German, Austrian, Belgian, Bavarian, Hebrew, Russian, Polish, Dutch, and Italian recordings in order to launch the make in an attractive manner.

[Señor José Soler Gomez, violin, on Favorite 64018 in *La Paloma* was played.]

The next German label to arrive was called the *Globos Record*. This was a 10" indestructible disc to be had either a single-side or double-side recorded. It claimed to be cheap but was not, at 2s. for a single-side recording or at 3s. for a double-side recording. From Frank Rauth, of Christopher Street, Finsbury Square, London E.C., another German Merchants Agent, he was representing the **Schallplattenfabrik Glo-**

bophon G.m.b.H. of Hanover, Germany which introduced the Globophon/Globos Records in Germany in February 1906. Rauth introduced them into Britain in November 1906 and announced that recording staff had already been in England recording British artists. One of the discs was an issue to mark the centenary of the death of Queen Louise. A pedal harp, with which Queen Louise of Germany used to accompany her own singing, was used to accompany the opera singer, Frieda Singler, recorded singing Kerner's poem *To Queen Louise*, the harp being played by the Court Harpist, A. Swart. The Globophone recording expert was reported to be employing a new method of recording which successfully captured the tones of the old Queen's harp. Globos, later as Globophon discs, are rarely found but sales continued at least until 1912, when (as double-sided only) the price had reduced to 1s. 6d., and were breakable hard stock discs.

The third German make of disc to reach British shores in December 1906 was the *Homophon(e) Record*. The **Homophone Company G.m.b.H.** had been advertising its discs, with a small disc called *Lilliput* from Germany since the summer. Single and double-sided recorded Homophones came through **Bernhard Andres and Co.**, another German Merchants Agent, at Chiswell House, Finsbury Pavement, London E.C. The single-side recorded discs were priced at 2s. 6d. with the double-sided at 4s. There were 230 discs in the initial catalogue, most of which were of French and German origin, including well-known opera singers from France, Germany and Italy. There were only seven British discs, all recorded by the Band of the Northumberland Hussars under Lt. H. G. Amers.

[Homophone 712 with Billy Williams singing *I've Found Kelly* was demonstrated.]

The most dramatic turn of events of 1906 was the abandonment by Pathé of its

What is the "Favorite" Record?

*Important
Notice to the Trade.*

THE FAVORITE RECORD is the Acme of Perfection.
 THE FAVORITE RECORD is a 7" 10", & 12" Disc Record.
 THE FAVORITE RECORD is Single and Double-sided.
 THE FAVORITE RECORD Wears like Steel.
 THE FAVORITE RECORD Cannot be Excelled for Quality.
 THE FAVORITE RECORD is Grand in Tone.
 THE FAVORITE RECORD is Splendid in Finish.
 THE FAVORITE RECORD Gives a *Natural* Reproduction.

THEREFORE
 The "Favorite" Record

WILL BE
THE FAVORITE
 ON THE MARKET.

For full particulars apply to

THE INTERNATIONAL FAVORITE RECORD Co., Ltd.,

British Representative: A. F. VISCHER,

Telephone: No. 8522 Central.

17, HATTON GARDEN, LONDON, E.C.

In any correspondence with Advertisers please mention the PHONO TRADER.

cylinder record market in Britain. It replaced its cylinders with an 11" centre-start, hill-and-dale cut single-sided disc record. Pathé Disc records had been promised as early as February, but all remained secretive until September when the discs were promised once more from the French company. Pathé Frères was then operating the British end of the business directly (and had been since June). The discs, selling at 3s. each, were not put on sale until November 15th.

[Pianist/composer Alfred West, with his own composition *Heroine Patrol* on a later Pathé double-sided disc, 5531 was played.]

Thus ended 1906, with the Disc Record Company Ltd., the Columbia Phonograph Co. Gen'l. and the Crystalate Manufacturing Co. Ltd. producing disc records in England; with the Imperial Records imported from America; with Pathé Discs imported from Belgium, via France and Beka, Favorite, Globos, Homophone, all Gramophone and Zonophone Records and some Odeon and Fonotipias all being imported from pressing plants in Germany.

To be continued

Corrigenda

Frank Andrews has written in to point out some errors that appeared in Part 3 of his *The British Record Industry during the Reign of King Edward VII 1901 - 1910*. I give the correct details below:

Page 174. Second column first line: The title was *Salvation Army Patrol*.

Page 176. First column *1905 Failures etc.* In the second paragraph Columbia's address is given as Earlsfield E.C. This should be Earlsfield, S.W., although at the time the Columbia factory was completed a trade periodical gave the area as Surrey.

Page 176. First column sixth line: Lowest Possible Prices not Process.

Page 178. Second column the last bracketed sentence should read "No example of a double-sided Nicole was played at Neasden."

{I apologise for these errors and thank Frank for advising me of the correct wording. Ed.}

C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

The California Ramblers - Edison Laterals 2. This CD, which was given an excellent review by Paul Collenette in the October 1994 issue of *Hillandale News*, is now in stock. Price £13 plus £1.30 postage (U.K.) and £1.95 postage (overseas). {I can only re-iterate Paul's comments on this CD. I've hardly had it out of my CD player since I got it! Ed.}

C.L.P.G.S. Booklist,
c/o Don Moore,

Caistor, Lincolnshire LN7 6RX

VOCALION FEVER by Karl O'Sullivan

This rather rare and temporarily debilitating disease struck me in a devastating manner on April 22nd 1993, when I discovered an incomplete and totally derelict Aeolian Vocalion at my local auction house. The lid was missing, the tone arm and bracket were smashed and the turntable was also missing. When I got it home I wondered what I had let myself in for, as it had stood for who knows how long in damp conditions. The original glue had completely broken down and all that held it together was the screws round the motor board and the screws in the base of the record storage compartment.

The veneers had all fallen off, and a complete rebuild was called for. A friend helped me with the initial stages which began the following week, when I dismantled the cabinet and sanded down every part by hand to remove every trace of the original glue. The rebuild, veneering, sanding, staining and polishing took fifteen hours over a period of four and a half weeks, including thirty minutes to make a key. I then got in touch with several people in the hope of obtaining parts, and the disease slowly subsided and then lay dormant until an advertisement, which I had placed with *Hillandale News* and published in the June 1994 issue, was answered by someone in South Wales. He supplied the missing lid. The restoration of the outside took three hours over three days, bringing the total to seventeen hours over a five-week period.

Then began a search in earnest for suitable parts, which involved a trip to the Gramophone Shop in Luton. A tone arm and turntable were purchased here, and the machine was finally complete and working on August 29th 1994. A cure had been found which could never have been produced by the National Health Service.



Karl's restored Aeolian Vocalion



I list the times and costs of treating my illness below:

Vocallon Work Log

Cleaning	30 mins.
Sanding	2 hrs 30 mins
Survey	30 mins
Dismantle &	
Clean rear section	30 mins
Horn panel rebuild	1 hour
Rear panel rebuild	1 hour
Front & left panel rebuild	1 hour
Finish ready for veneer	1 hour
Front door	1 hour
Veneering	1 hour 30 mins
Filling, trimming & filling	2 hours
Sand/stain	1 hour
Polishing	1 hour
<hr/>	
14 hours 30 mins over	
4½ weeks (7/93)	

Key	30 mins
<hr/>	
15 hours over 5 weeks (7/94)	

Strip & stain lid	2 hours
Stain & polish	1 hour
<hr/>	
3 hours over 3 days	

Total 17 hours over 5 weeks

Date working 29/8/94

Vocallon Inventory

Auction Price as seen	£8.94
Glue	£2.30
Hire of sash cramps	£7.05
Veneer	£19.90
Polish	£2.90
Filler	£1.75
Stain	£3.65
Lid (& freight)	£26.00
Stripper	£2.65
Tone arm & turntable	£12.00
Soundbox	£16.00
<hr/>	
Total price restored	£103.14

C.L.P.G.S. PHONOFAIR

The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society
presents

7th Northampton Phonofair

Saturday 29th April 1995

10.00am to 4.00pm

Abington Vale Middle School, Bridgewater Drive, Northampton.

Good Parking, Signed from Motorway. Refreshments/Lunch. Details: Ruth Lambert

REPEATING GRAMOPHONES LTD.

by Frank Andrews

Mr A. F. R. Cotton and Sydney Howard Cotton applied for Letters Patent for a repeating mechanism, from an address of 1a Chesterfield Street, Mayfair, London W1. They were given an application number, 31056, on 11th December 1919 and their patent was subsequently granted and given patent number 144203.

Four inventions concerning sound-boxes and two inventions concerning tone-arms were subject to further applications for Letters Patent by A. F. R. Cotton.

The repeating mechanism for gramophones comprised an electrical apparatus for automatically raising a sound-box and returning the tone-arm to enable records to be repeatedly played. The main principle consisted of two switch members, adjustably supported on a horizontal bar, so as to be operated by the tone-arm at each end of its travel. The switch at the finishing point was combined with a hold-on electro-magnet, so that the electro-magnet for lifting the sound-box is maintained energised, whilst the tone-arm is returned by a spring weight. Bells, buzzers, or the like, may be sounding during the returning of the tone-arm. The mechanism may be created by sliding one of the switches into a position where the sound-box needle falls clear of the record onto a brake lever.

Beside the magnet, an armature was used, secured to the sound-box rim. A commutator, rotated by an electric motor. The speed was adjusted by a rheostat. Alternative mountings for the magnet were allowed for. Cushioning of the magnet was achieved by residual magnetism or with the use of a dash pot. At least five illustrations and full specifications were submitted.

Repeating Gramophones Ltd. No. 170653, a private company with £15,000 nominal capital in £1 shares, was registered on 5th October 1920. An Agreement was formed whereby A. F. R. Cotton sold his invention and six other inventions, with patents applied for, to the Company for £7,800 (£50 in cash and £7,750 of £1 shares, fully paid up). The Registered Office was at 26a Union Road, Cambridge.

The directors of the Company were Major Thomas Stanley Chambers, of the Royal Engineers, Edward Frederick Morris, undergraduate at Cambridge University and A. F. R. Cotton, student and researcher, Major George Arthur Bruce of the Royal Engineers had consented to become a director, but had resigned on 4th October, the day before incorporation. 3,050 £1 shares had been allocated and paid for in cash. Five members of the Cotton family held 8,450 shares, Morris held 250 and Admiral Sir R. Tupper also held 250.

On 17th December 1920 Cotton applied for *Three Muses* to be registered as a trade-mark, with Repeating Gramophones Ltd. also submitting on the same day. The mark was registered to the Company, not Cotton, in June 1921 with the number 410741.

Between 17th December 1920 and 14th January 1921 another 4,100 shares were taken up and distributed among 26 different people. As at January 1921 the Board of Directors comprised A. F. R. Cotton, Major T. S. Chambers (who was the first Secretary of the business), J. W. Taylor, Lord Louis Mountbatten of St. James' Palace. Mr E. H. F. Morris had resigned on 5th January.

On 6th April 1921 H.R.H. The King of Spain bought 50 shares and Rear Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey, G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., C.B. took 40 shares. On 12th April 1921 the registered Office of the Company was changed to 102, New Bond Street, London W.1. and an additional director appointed. He was Major Herbert Augustus Wernher. Another *Three Muses* trade-mark had been applied for at the beginning of March 1921. This also carried a representation of the three female muses. The mark was registered in July 1921. An additional director, Admiral Sir R. G. O. Tupper R.N., K.C.B. was appointed on 23rd September 1921. He was already a shareholder. Major Chambers had resigned as a director, a week earlier, on the 16th.

At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Company, held in the Victor Hotel, Northumberland Avenue, on 3rd January 1922 it was resolved to increase the maximum number of directors from five to seven. This was later confirmed at a second meeting held in the New Bond Street Offices later. The £15,000 shares had all been taken up by 17th January 1922 and the board now comprised A. F. R. Cotton, Lord Mountbatten, Major H. A. Wernher, Admiral Tupper, Clarence Henty, Captain Charles Bradwell and Henry Pelham-Clinton.

There were quite a few stockholders, besides some of the directors, who were in the armed forces. They came from such parts as the Royal Navy, the Grenadier Guards, the Welsh Guards and the Royal Engineers. From 2nd July there was a new Company Secretary, Mr B. J. L. Bosanquet, who held 100 shares.

Among the stockholders at this juncture H. R. H. The King of Spain (50 shares), H. R. H. The Prince of Wales and H. R. H. The Duke of York (with 50 each, The 6th Earl of Portarlington (150 shares), Lord Claud Hamilton (Grenadier Guards), the Rt. Hon. Lord Southborough, The Marquis and Mar-

chioness of Milford Haven, Lady Avice Menzies, Lady Nina Arbuthnot and Sir Philip Sassoon.

On 1st May 1923 Sydney Howard Cotton was appointed a director in place of J. W. Taylor, who had retired on 3rd January 1923. Also on 1st May 1923 another Extraordinary General Meeting took place at the Victoria Hotel, Northumberland Avenue, where another resolution was passed and confirmed the next day at a meeting in the Registered Office. This resolution increased the Company's capital to £20,000 by the issue of another 5,000 £1 shares to those, whom the directors approved of. On 18th May 1923 this increase in capital was officially registered. 4,520 shares were allocated. Between May 1923 and June 1924 another 400 shares were purchased, leaving just 80 in reserve.

Registration of a third trade-mark, the word *Tremusa*, was applied for on 18th July 1923. This was granted in November 1923. A fourth trade-mark, showing a kitten in a sound-box with the words "Repeating Gramophones Ltd.", was submitted for registration on 3rd August 1923. This was granted on 12th March 1924.

A £2,000 mortgage debenture on all the Company's property was created on 7th September 1925, with £1,000 issued on the 25th. The document was signed by Violette I. Cotton, then designated as The Managing Director. The other directors at this point were A. F. R. Cotton, Admiral Tupper, A. C. Bedworth, S. H. Cotton and Frank Phillips-Merchant.

In April 1927 the Registered Office was given as 187 Brompton Road, London S. W. By 17th January 1928 there were only three directors, A. F. R. Cotton, Violette Inez Cotton and Admiral Tupper, but Lord Louis Mountbatten and the other members of the Royal Family were still shareholders in the Company.

By April 1930 the Company had failed to send its return for 1929 to Companies House and a reminder letter of notice had been sent to Brompton Road. The address was crossed out by the Post Office and replaced with (what looks like) 22 Ballard Street E.C.3 (not in today's A-Z) but that too was crossed out marked "Gone Away".

A second letter was sent out, dated 4th August 1930, to the Brompton Road address and then a third letter, dated 3rd September. Both had been marked and returned to Companies House as "Gone Away".

A fourth and last letter was sent to Brompton Road on November 14th 1930 warning, that, unless heard from, the Company would be struck off the Register of Companies after a lapse of three months, by notice in the *London Gazette* (the British Government's official newspaper). That letter was also marked as "Gone Away" and Repeating Gramophones Ltd. was dissolved by Notice in the *London Gazette* of 24th February 1931.

In the meantime A. F. R. Cotton, with an address at 9 Weatherby Gardens S.W.5 had submitted the word *Vorcion* as a registered trade-mark for sound-boxes on 29th August 1929. This was registered in December 1929.

Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| February 16th | Peter Copeland of the National Sound Archive will talk about his research into the recording speeds of records. |
| March 16th | <i>More of It's Not What It Seems</i> - Chris Hamilton takes a further look at commercial transfers of 78 rpm recordings. |
| April 20th | <i>We Have Our Own Records</i> , Part 3 - Frank Andrews presents a further glimpse into the world of unusual labels |
| May 19th | Eliot Levin of Symposium Records will demonstrate his new cylinder playing machine. Members are invited to bring along their favourite cylinders and let Eliot reveal their true secrets on his machine! |
| June 15th | <i>The Blues and the Greys</i> presented by George Frow and Dominic Combe. A cylinder programme using a machine from Dominic's collection. |

A SUBSTITUTE FOR TRANSFERS

by Mike Field

Where the cabinet of a gramophone or phonograph is in such poor condition that re-polishing is the only solution, the problem of the transfer(s) arises. Although the Society Booklist can supply many excellent transfers, the stock is necessarily limited to the more common and widely used ones. Occasionally a machine may be acquired with a less common name for which there does not appear to be any supplier for the transfer; and, following a well-known law, the more uncommon (and probably initially cheap) the machine the more exotic is the transfer.

One way out of the difficulty is to use a photograph but not just by pasting on a happy snap. The emulsion in which the picture is captured is very thin and if this can be separated from the backing paper and fixed in position, the result can be nearly as good as waterslide transfers.

As Mrs Beaton might have said, first find a machine with a good transfer and take a colour close-up using the best camera available. I find it advisable to take several using slightly different exposures and distances so as to be able to choose the best picture. If you are competent with a camera (unlike me!) you may be able to select the best from the negative but it will be easier to select from prints. Once the choice is made the negative is processed so that an exact size image is obtained and a matt print or two is made.

I find the big postal processing firms quite okay and cheap provided you ask for standard sizes. This is where the point of taking several shots at different distances scores, because it is likely that one of them will be the correct size when printed on a standard-size enlargement.

Having got the print with the correct dimensions, coat the surface with a clear varnish, but check first on another print that the varnish you sue does not affect the emulsion. I find clear

polyurethane varnish okay. Leave to dry thoroughly and then cut round the picture as close to the edges as possible. Put the picture face upwards in warm water and leave to soak for several hours. Then peel off the paper backing. The final vestiges of paper can be removed by placing the picture face down on a suitable flat surface and rubbing gently with a soft rag or the fingers. This process may take a considerable time involving several immersions and lots of patience! The final result should be a thin, almost translucent, film of the desired transfer.

I would not pretend this is a quick easy job and a bit of practice helps, so it would be prudent to experiment on any unwanted photograph. The thing to remember is that the image is delicate and vigorous rubbing of the backing paper may result in holes in the emulsion.

Put a thin coat of varnish on the area where the transfer is to go and allow to go tacky. Then press the thin emulsion on to the varnish and remove any air bubbles by gently rubbing with the thumb from the centre to the edges. Provided the varnish is not too tacky you should be able to adjust the position slightly but it is better to get it right first time! Leave to dry for at least a day. There will be a detectable edge to the transfer but if this offends, you can build up the surrounding area with successive coats of varnish until the surface of the case and the transfer is level. Then put a coat or two of varnish over the whole area and the result should be almost as good as new.

(In America transfers are known as decals. Ed.)

PEOPLE, PAPER AND THINGS by George Frow

Cylinder collectors are likely to be aware of the 2-minute and 4-minute Wax and Blue Amberols made by the Johann Strauss Orchestra (or Band) in the German series, and may have some of these fine cylinders. This Johann Strauss III (1866-1939) was the nephew of Johann II, the 'Waltz King' (1825-1899) but it is not known if any simple attempts were made to record his uncle's orchestra in the last decade of his life.

However, tucked away in the corner of an 1889 pamphlet in the writer's files is a short report of a recording of the Eduard Strauss Orchestra being made in a Viennese music-hall. Eduard (1835-1916) was a brother of the 'Waltz King' and father of the Johann who recorded for Edison, and Eduard had taken over the orchestra of his father Johann I (1804-1849) who is remembered for the *Radetzky March* (1848).

This recording was made by arrangement with the conductor, the Band is described as 'waiting' and after 'the enormous funnel' had been adjusted it struck up *The Blue Danube*. The report continues:

"Musicians and conductor seemed to be fully aware that they were playing not only to the world but for posterity. The famous waltz has perhaps never been played with such purity and such vigour. Herr Strauss was quite impatient while the wax cylinder and tubes were screwed on (sic) and it was interesting to watch his face as he listened to the familiar strains that returned to him. he followed every note most critically and confirmed the assertion that not one tone had undergone the slightest change. Afterwards a merry polka was played and a minuet from a string quartette, the gentle refined music of which was wonderfully reproduced. Mendelssohn's *Farewell to the Forest* came next and a quartette of cornets and the instrument rendered the loud passages as faithfully as the soft and gentle ones."

It is difficult to say if fact and fancy get mixed up in this account, but it sounds plausible. Does anyone know if such wax cylinders are preserved in a Viennese archive?

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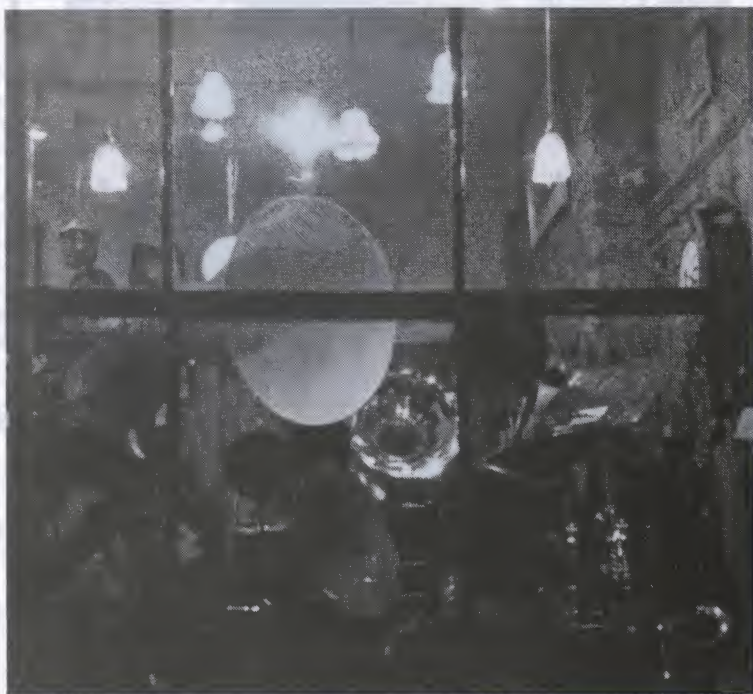
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LETTERS



Joseph Holbrooke (1878-1958)

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I hope that you might be able to allow me through your journal to beg the help of your members with a number of enquiries concerned with the British composer Joseph Holbrooke whose life and music I have been researching since 1988.

Holbrooke enjoyed a modest ascendancy during the first three decades of the century. Unlike many of the recognised names of the British Musical Renaissance he did not come from an affluent family background but had to struggle for what he achieved. He attended the Royal Academy of Music but left the Academy early for financial reasons. His first tone poem *The Raven* finally found favour with August Manns who performed it to acclaim at the Crystal Palace (1900). After this the tone poem *The Skeleton in Armour* (later re-named *The Viking*) was given with even greater success by Bantock and by Henry Wood at the 1900 Proms. From this point commissions began to flow with successes at many festivals including Bristol, Birmingham, Hereford, Leeds, Sheffield and Bournemouth. After 1929 his name and reputation diminished and plunged into obscurity as his romantic music became unfashionable.

Although Holbrooke's music is largely unknown these days there are one or two works that have been broadcast in the U.K. which mark out Holbrooke's talent as an uncommon one. In the orchestral field the tone poem *Ulalume* is a work of powerful atmosphere achieving a gloomy intensity and sorrowing beauty comparable with Rachmaninov's *Isle of the Dead*.

There are two enquiries:

1. In the *World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music* there is a reference to a 78 recording of Holbrooke's Fourth Symphony (1929) scored for small orchestra and written as an entry in the Columbia Schubert Competition. The artists involved were the Torquay Municipal Orchestra conducted by Ernest Goss. The recording itself seems to have disappeared altogether. Does anyone have the records or can anyone offer any details? They were mentioned in an article by Lewis Foreman and Graham Parlett but otherwise I have never even found anyone who ever owned

them, let alone finding the discs themselves. I have been in touch with the composer's son and a number of other sources including the ARSC Journal but all to no avail. An advertisement in Gramophone produced nothing.

2. Another enigma which your readers may be able to unlock relates to some infuriatingly brief extracts of orchestral works made for Holbrooke in the States. These 78s including 2 or 3 minute 'slices' from *The Raven*, *The Viking* and four or five other works bear the following addresses: 'Nola Recording Studios, 1657 Broadway, New York 19, N.Y. Plaza 7 - 4870' and 'Broadcaster, Steinway Hall, 113 West 57th Street, New York, 19 N.Y. Judson 6 - 0040'? Does anyone know anything at all about these records, their dates, performers or origins?

If any of your readers are able to help in any way with information in answer to the matters I have mentioned or indeed with any information about Holbrooke and the performance of his music in the U.S.A. then I would be grateful if they would make contact with me.

Yours sincerely

Rob Barnett, Meadow Cottage, [redacted]
[redacted] Isle of Lewis, Western Isles, Scotland PA86
0BG. Tel: [redacted]

Help Please!

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I have a "His Master's Voice" mirror with a 16" by 12" frame. The frame is damaged round the "His Master's Voice" banner (see the enclosed photograph). I wish to restore this but have no idea what the complete banner looks like. Can anyone supply me with a photograph or drawing/diagram of the whole banner so that I can restore the mirror frame correctly?

Your sincerely,

Alan Moore, [redacted] Woos-
hill, Wokingham, Berks. RG11 9UL



Vera Harris/Billy Whitlock

Dear Chris,

The recent passing of Billy Whitlock's daughter, Mrs Vera Harris, is a reminder of an incident that was reported in August 1915 and may now be told. *The Sound Wave* relates that Whitlock was brought before the Magistrate at the Guildhall, London and charged in his own name of Frederick Gabriel Penna under the (wartime) Defence of the Realm Act. The offence was that he had a lamp on his motor cycle "capable of movement apart from the vehicle". The cycle was inspected and the lamp said to be an ordinary attachment, but the Court was desirous of looking into his nationality. He said his mother was born in Cheltenham but neither she or he had his birth certificate. J. E. Hough Ltd. stood bail in the sum of £50 and in time a copy certificate was produced at Somerset House and the Court convinced that there were no improper motives in having the moveable headlight on the motor cycle. Whitlock, who had spent 24 hours in a cell was fined 20 shillings and released, the fine described by the Magistrate as a memento of the occasion!

This is an example of the spy-mania that was experienced in the early days of the Great War (W.W.1), and the offence was probably nothing more than lamp-bracket that had become unscrewed. From the titles of some of his records Whitlock was a firm patriot.

Yours sincerely,
George Frow, Sevenoaks, Kent

Date about all those English 78s

Dear Chris,

With reference to Peter Adamson's review of *Date about all those English 78s* by Eddie Shaw. Peter gives some illustrations of the labels covered, one of which was Marathon Records. It may interest members to know that my history of all the records and the two companies which produced them, along with a complete listing (with issue dates and known matrices) appeared in *Talking Machine Review* No.72, April 1987.

As regards the HMV D series: that series was listed in *The Voices of the Past* Volume 5, which I have updated giving recording and release dates for all the discs (including re-recordings), plus the deletion dates. The same applies to the companion E series.

The whole updated lists, which await publication, lie with Michael Smith, the original compiler.

As for the Columbia LX series, the same updating procedure has been undertaken and it was hoped to include them with the recently published 12" Columbia listings by Ronald Taylor, but that was not considered feasible. The 10" companion LB prefixed series has likewise been updated. The problem of having such lists published is proving difficult.

Other lists I have on hand, giving issue dates for each record and recording dates for most, include Zonophone single-sided, Zonophone double-sided (which began as Twin Records, Cinch Records, Parlophone 12" E series, Parlophone 10" F series, Parlophone-Odeon Records (12" & 10" mixed) which began as Parlophone 'Royalty' Records, Beka Grand Records, Coliseum Records (first series 10" and 12"), Scala records 10" & 12", Favorite, Homophon, Jumbo, Columbia 10" DB series, Beltona all series etc.

I agree with you that Steven Barr's *The Almost Complete 78rpm Record Dating Guide* is far from complete with regard to British issues. Quite a lot of his textual information is inaccurate and some of the lists with dates could be much more detailed.

I would like to see what someone would make of the Odeon records in Britain, where catalogue numbers were presented in four different ways for some of the same stock from 1906 to 1922.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Andrews, Neasden, London NW10

[P.S. I am trying to trace a disc recording for a colleague, who remembers it as a 10" disc (in 1944 when he heard it) with a black label. It is a song about the disastrous sinking of the Titanic ocean liner. He does not know the title of the song but it begins thus: "it was on a Monday morning just after two o'clock, when the great Titanic began etc., etc." Can anyone identify please? It was sung by a male singer. F.A.]

Dear Chris,

As compiler of the above may I please be permitted space to comment upon Peter Adamson's review. Firstly, the majority of feedback I have received from fellow collectors is one of great satisfaction with this work, and I have also received a lot of additional information. As a result of that recently I have had to publish a second revised edition because the number

of amendments, which would have been in supplements, would have tended to confuse rather than help.

The appearance of the new edition has been improved, using a clear plastic binder and slide, a different typeface, a complete listing of all known labels and where their details are/will be (Parts 2 or 3), main colours where known, and page numbers (although what good they are in an alphabetical listing beats me!) totalling over 80.

As Peter will appreciate, any research is an ongoing project, and time is in short supply when one is working full-time. However I am aware that I have to go through the National Sound Archives, the Colindale newspaper library, all issues of *The Gramophone*, etc.; but Rome wasn't built in a day, and not to publish anything because it's not 100% would mean waiting for ever for those volumes. Is it not better to have a basis to work from and improve together?

I have not intended that these books should be definitive histories of each label - that may come, along with illustrations of the different labels - but purely a dating guide. As for providing source references against each label, not only would this be another Herculean task, but it would probably double the size of the books, and to what benefit for the collector who just wants to date his record?

As for Peter suffering poor eyesight whilst reading D.A.T.E.S. which has seven lines per column inch, normal typewriting is six, and *Hillandale News* in part is eight. The revised edition is at six.

Hoping members will continue their help which is much appreciated and my many thanks to all who have done so. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Eddie Shaw, London EC1

{One attempt at a history of labels with illustrations has already been published. This is *The English 78 Picture Book*, compiled by Don Taylor and published by Artemis Publishing Consultants of Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. This book is available from TMR, 105 Sturdee Avenue, Gillingham, Kent. It costs £28 plus 10% postage for buyers in the U.K.. Ed.}

Waltzing Matilda

Dear Sir,

I was extremely interested to read the letter from your antipodean correspondent, Peter Burgis, in the December 1994 *Hillandale News* (p.191) in connection with the *Waltzing Matilda* discography.

This re-awakened memories of a controversy some ten years ago in the Medway Towns of Kent where I work on the local BBC radio station as a news producer. The then Mayor created quite a stir when he claimed that *Waltzing Matilda* was none other than a soldiering song from the 1600s. His claim was backed by no lesser a work than *Pax Britannica - The Climax of an Empire* by James Morris, published in 1968 by Faber and Faber. On page 354 Morris states:

"...Australia gave to the Empire the best of all its marching songs, perhaps the best any Empire ever had - *Waltzing Matilda*. A balladist called A. B. Patterson ('The Banjo') wrote the words of this superb piece and they were set to a tune which probably began as a seventeenth century English soldiers' song *The Bold Fusilier*."

In a footnote James Morris states that Patterson (1864-1941) claimed never to have heard the words of this song and to have been attracted purely by its tune. But as Morris points out, the original lyric rings familiar:

"A gay Fusilier was marching down through Rochester,
Bound for the war in the Low Country,
And he cried as he tramped through the dear streets of Rochester
'Who'll be a sojer for Marlbro' with me?'
'Who'll be a sojer, who'll be a sojer, who'll be a sojer
For Marlbro' with me?'
And he cried as he tramped through the dear streets of Rochester
'Who'll be a sojer for Marlbro' with me?'"

The then Mayor of Rochester upon Medway, Councillor Tom Mason, was so pleased to discover that his city was on the musical map, that he recorded the song which was issued in seven-inch, 45rpm format in 1984. I have a copy of this record in my collection and I enclose photostats of the record label and the front of the record cover.

I think that even Tom Mason would admit that his disc was not destined to become a best seller; nonetheless it is an extremely interesting social document.

The item in *Pax Britannica* says that *Waltzing Matilda* was first sung in public at the North Gregory Hotel at Winton in Queensland: a plaque on the pub says so.

I hope the foregoing may be of use to Mr Burgis and of interest to your readers.

Yours faithfully,
Colin Johnson, Minster-on-Sea, Kent



CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

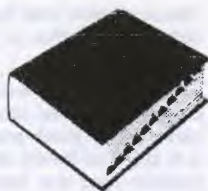
Notice of an

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

to be held in The National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London on 16th March 1995 at 6.40pm to pass the following resolutions:

- 1) This meeting agrees to add Rule 8 to the Rules of the Society:
"The Committee is authorised to proceed with the incorporation of *The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Ltd.* in accordance with the terms of the draft memorandum and articles produced at the EGM held on 16th March 1995."
- 2) This meeting authorises the Committee to provide for the dissolution of the Society and the transfer the Society's assets to the above mentioned company subject to such retentions as the Committee may consider requisite for the purpose of providing for the existing liabilities of the Society and the cost of the transfer.
- 3) This meeting authorises the Committee to register the *The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Ltd.* in accordance with the Company Law requirements and to thereafter seek formal charitable registration from the Charity Commissioners.

REVIEWS



Comedian Harmonists

by Peter Czada and Günther Grosse

This beautiful book sets a standard for publications on musicians and singers whose performances have been recorded on sound carriers. It has been written in such an engaging style, that the reader easily absorbs the atmosphere of the late twenties and thirties of this century, not only in Europe, but in Australia and the USA as well.

The history is described of a group of male singers, called the Comedian Harmonists, and also the environmental aspects of the period. The position of Jews in Germany just after the Great War of 1914-1918 is mentioned in the section that covers the personal lives of the members Frommermann, Cycowski and Collin as well as later on in the book when the Nazi era is mentioned.

One gets a good impression of the development during the interbellum of the taste of the general public and the demand for high quality light entertainment where the singing is important and not just a vocal chorus. It is interesting to read how much attention was paid to bring beautiful voices together and to attain a high level of singing. When one sees the various labels of gramophone records (a number in colour in the book) it becomes clear that this seems to have been a universal taste since the group sang in German first but later also in English, French and Italian.

Apart from performances in the theatres, the Comedian Harmonists also assisted in more than ten German moving pictures of pre-war fame with titles such as *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* and *Bomber auf Monte Carlo*.

All this is very illustrative in describing the atmosphere in that period of *Götterdämmerung* in the deepest economic crisis and somewhat later of the more profound moral crisis in Germany just before the Second World War.

The gist of the book can be described very concisely. There once was a group of successful male vocalists in the USA called the Revellers, whose gramophone

records were a sensation in 1927. Four well-educated voices with piano accompaniment sang perfectly-arranged songs such as *Nola* and *Dinah*. The success of the disc records of this group in Europe caused Harry Frommermann in Berlin, where there was much unemployment among artists (as well as in nearly all other professions), to form a group on the same principles as those of the USA example in 1927/8. The book describes the starting problems in detail. However their first Odeon discs had already been recorded in August 1928.

They quickly became so popular that by 1930 their vocal assistance was required in films. Because half the group of the Comedian Harmonists consisted of Jews, the rise to power of the Nazi government in 1933 forced the group to perform permanently outside Germany from 1934 onwards. They toured throughout Europe and the USA where they took part in more than 30 broadcasts for the NBC in 1934. In early 1935 the group split into two parts: a Jewish part and an Aryan one that was allowed to perform under Nazi law. The Jewish group, extended with new singers, maintained the name Comedian Harmonists and the German part (also enlarged) carried the name Meister Sextet. The Comedian Harmonists then travelled through the parts of Europe that were not under Nazi control. They later adopted the name Comedy Harmonists and had great success in Australia, New Zealand and America. The Meister Sextet had also great success in Europe.

In fact both branches were successful until the forties. Then, however, the decline in popularity became manifest. Had public appreciation changed? Was the War the cause of a change in taste? The Meister Sextet came to an end in 1941 and the Comedian Harmonists followed suit slightly later. Although after 1945 an attempt was made to revive the Comedian Harmonists with American singers, the success of the old days was never repeated.

In the book attention is paid to the life of the various members as well as the situations under which they performed. All biographies are accompanied by pictures. Special mention should be made of the very fine quality of the crisp black and white photographs.

The book is intended not only to be a tribute to the fine vocalists that operated as Comedian Harmonists, but also as a collector's compendium for it contains a full discography of 78rpm records and LP albums for all the three groups: Comedian Harmonists from Berlin, Meister Sextet and the Comedian Harmonists emigré group. The book also contains a complete filmography. An exhaustive bibliography and personnel index is added. All in all a very recommendable book.

This book of 202 pages, lavishly illustrated with black and white pictures and 8 pages of colour photographs, ISBN 3-89468-082-2, is published by **Edition Hentrich**, Berlin, Germany, P.O. Box 410724, 12117 Berlin and costs **DM 58** in Germany.

Frans Jansen

Columbia Twelve-Inch Records in the United Kingdom from 1906-1930

A Discography by Ronald Taylor

As a buyer of 78s for 60 years, I have always thought of the Columbia 12-inchers as the foundation stones of my collection, not that the HMVs were to be less regarded but because there were always more Columbias available through bankrupt stock, and were soon found to have better surfaces and just as interesting artistes; the Bournemouth Municipal or Johann Strauss orchestras were a bargain at a shilling. Most of the records that could be found had light blue or dark blue labels with the latter predominating, though rather a 'blackberry' black than any shade of blue. But there were other colour or number runs, and some listed in this discography most of us have never seen, and others are so rare that details were even lost before the formation of E.M.I. Ltd. in 1931 brought the two companies together. Collectors with Columbias on their shelves who can fill the missing matrix numbers and dates will earn the compiler's gratitude.

The project was initiated by Malcolm Walker and the catalogue put together over a long time by Ronald Taylor of *The Collector's Room*, who acknowledges help from Michael Smith's earlier listing, Frank Andrews and Ruth Edge and others from overseas, and that's a good team for a 78 discography.

Columbia is one of the oldest, if not the oldest corporate name in the history of sound recording, and the first Columbias in the U.K. were mostly from American masters, followed by Italian and Spanish series, while the first Renu and Columbia-Renu started at number 99 in October 1909, reached 999 in 1924 and by March 1930 had reached 9943, when the DXs started their 30 years career. The L 1001 series ran from October 1915 and by February 1930 had reached L 2374 when it became LX 1. These Ls had begun with Beecham and finished at Harty but the label series strayed from the classical and romantic pieces into West End musical comedies

that flourished in those times. Columbia cornered the market from *Bing Boys* to *Zig-Zag* with some success, and provided the first album for such shows with *The Maid of the Mountains* in 1917.

These stage records brought several variations of label, either being green or blue in two tones, or one shade of green or blue, the 'starlight' blue, and sets can be found with four or five different styles in use. The *Celebrity*, *De Luxe*, *Grand Opera*, several single-sided series and the *Jewish* series are all listed, and there is an adequate General Index.

Columbia could claim to be the first to release a commercial electric recording, the Memorial Record made at Westminster Abbey on November 11th 1920 by Merriman and Guest being listed but not numbered. I believe it could be bought either at the Abbey or through the *Times* newspaper. Another first was the electric recording of the King at the opening of the Tyne Bridge in 1928 on 9414. With its elaborate label and pictorial centre this is shown in colour on the front cover, fine camera work revealing the bridge and the surroundings in greater detail than is usually visible. Another famous early electric was 9048 of 1925 with massed choirs in the Metropolitan Opera House.

I found this discography catered well for personal collecting inquiries, sending me along the shelves to confirm details, but I was not happy with the type face used. There is obviously a need to save lateral space but the print's undernourished look would take a while to get used to, and those responsible should have looked no further than earlier catalogues put out by this Society where the type is adequate but not crowded. The record label illustrations and catalogue extracts are useful, but at the price it seems a pity that a few sheets of coloured labels could not have been bound in.

Apart from this, it is a detailed book that will answer questions as fast as it invites them and has plenty for the enquiring collector, and is recommended. Much in its favour are the release and deletion dates against each item, calibrated to the nearest half month.

This book is available from Symposium Records, 110 Derwent Avenue, East Barnet, Hertfordshire EN4 8LZ. Size 12½" x 8¼" x ¾" 276 pages, soft cover and priced at £38 plus postage.

George Frow

REVIEWS



The Spirit of Christmas Past and Great Singers at the Mariinsky Theatre

The only problem with listening to re-issues of early material is the feelings of inadequacy it gives the listener about his or her own collection. It is well known in my family as the: "Cor, I'd sell my soul for a copy of that" syndrome! The syndrome reared its ugly head twice over the Christmas period...once in a limited form, and once in a full-blooded rampant guise!

The first occasion was when I listened to NIMBUS CD NI 7861: *The Spirit of Christmas Past* in the "Prima Voce" series. The enterprising Nimbus company has pulled together a total of 20 items, all with Christmas links varying from the tenuous to the full-blown holly-sprigged Yuletide connection.

There are such familiar favourites as John McCormack's 1915 recording of *Adeste Fidelis* and Schumann-Heink's *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht*, recorded in 1926, also for Victor.

But among the old friends are some real collector's items: the English actor Charles Laughton (1899-1962) recorded around 1943, reading *The oldest Christmas story* (with a pronounced mid-Atlantic accent) on US Decca 23365A. And what about fellow English actor Basil Rathbone (1892-1967) reciting *The night before Christmas* issued on US Columbia 7407-M, probably in 1939. There's also the American baritone Lawrence Tibbett singing and speaking - on an unpublished Victor recording of December 1939 which sounds almost as if it was taken off-air from a wireless programme.

Totally musical offerings include such varied items as Lotte Lehmann's 1928 Odeon of *O du fröhliche*, Paul Planel's Pathé of *Le repos de la Sainte Famille* by Berlioz and Warren's *Christmas Candle* sung by John Charles Thomas.

The disc is accompanied by a fully illustrated booklet with notes by Nigel Douglas, the distinguished English tenor who has just produced *More Legendary Voices*, a follow-up to his highly popular first book on the subject published a couple of years ago. His latest book - like its predecessor - has an accompanying Nimbus CD.

All the transfers on this Christmas disc were carried out using the method, devised by Norman White, which utilises playing mint condition discs with thorn needles on an acoustic gramophone and placing special microphones at the business end of the giant 22 foot long horn (see the article by Miles Mallinson in *Hillandale News* 197, April 1994 for a full description of the equipment and the process). If you are tempted to think this is just a gimmick, then I suggest you get a copy of this disc and listen for yourself.

If the sort of offerings on *The Spirit of Christmas* are not your cup of tea, then the other disc under review may be more to your taste, and - if anything - gives an even more convincing demonstration of the Nimbus system. The originals on this second CD are the sort of discs for which collectors would mortgage their souls. But sacrifices of that sort are unnecessary if it is the sound and not the actual discs you want.

Smirnov?...take your pick; Sobinov?...help yourself. Lipkovskaya, Nezhdanova, Bronskaya, Boronat...all those pre-Revolution singers who turn up all too rarely are here. But what about those the average collector with the average cheque-book never sees...Labinsky, Kastorsky, Vitting, and the legendary bass Sibiriyakov. They are all here together with the almost unpronounceable leading lights of St.Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre which was the operatic equivalent of Moscow's Bolshoi Ballet. Listening to the transfers it is hard to realise that all the tracks were recorded between 1908 and 1913, in that long-gone era when the Romanov dynasty ruled Russia and that we can hear the voices which thrilled the Russian royal family and nobility, whose era came to an end in the Revolution.

The CD includes a wide variety of operatic items, both Russian and mainstream western...in fact everything from Glinka's *Life for the Tsar* to Verdi's *La Traviata*. For my money though the best tracks are two duets: there's the electrifying

My darling shepherd friend with Yevgeniya Zbruyeva and Marie Kovalenko from Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame* (referred to here by its less familiar title of *The Queen of Spades*). The blend of the voices on this 84-year-old recording is enough to send shivers up and down your spine. Secondly there is the famous Lakmé duet with Antonina Nezhdanova and Yevgeniya Popello-Davidova. (Incidentally, and totally irrelevantly, no fewer than four of the singers on this CD are called Yevgeni or Yevgeniya which are the Russian equivalents of Eugene or Eugenia!)

The CD itself is accompanied by a well-researched and illustrated booklet containing notes on the Mariinsky Theatre, the singers and the recordings themselves, by no less an authority than Boris Semeonoff.

Great Singers at the Mariinsky Theatre (Nimbus NI 7865) and *The Spirit of Christmas Past* (Nimbus CD NI 7861) are produced by Nimbus Records for their "Prima Voce" series at £9.99 each. They are available from any good record shop or direct from Nimbus Records Ltd., Wyastone Leys, Monmouth, NP5 3SR, who can also supply a full catalogue.

Colin Johnson

Edward S. Walker

It was in the mid 1960s when I first made the acquaintance of Ted Walker, first by correspondence, then by meeting and ultimately by working with him on the first-ever discography of British Dance Bands.

Trained in the legal profession and latterly working in council affairs, Ted Walker's methodical mind was exactly right for investigating the facts of what went on in the recording studios of the inter-war years, although he never claimed to be a "numbers man"; it was the more esoteric details that interested him, and without him, that first book would never have been more than a good idea. I had the purely numerical details; it was Ted Walker who put the flesh of personnels on so many sessions. He was particularly interested in early British recordings of ragtime and ragtime-influenced popular music, a field completely untilled before he addressed himself to the task.

A few days after his 67th birthday, he died suddenly on October 4th 1994. He was most certainly no fool, but he pioneered steps into an uncharted land where recording angels feared to tread. Our knowledge of those early years is due very largely to Ted Walker's dedication.

Brian Rust

Barnacle Bill, the Sailor and other Sundry Salty Songs

Listening to this cassette gave me lots of enjoyment and fun. I had forgotten how enjoyable these old Broadcast 8" and Broadcast Twelve records were. All the songs are sung by Bobbie Comber and are accompanied, mostly by Jay Wilbur and his Band. In addition to *Barnacle Bill, the Sailor* we are offered *Oh! There Ain't Such a Thing as Worry*; *Slippery Sam*, *The Stoker*; *The Gay Caballero*; *Sunday School Stories*; *Back to Gay Paree*; *What Shall We Do With the Midshipmaid*; *La-di-dah-di-dah*; *Give Yourself a Pat on the Back*; *the Return of Barnacle Bill, the Sailor*; *An Elephant Never Forgets*; *Peg-Leg Jack*; *With Her Head Tucked Underneath Her Arm*; *After the Night Before*; *Bunkey-Doodle-I-Doh*; *Beer is Best*; *You Can't Do That There Here and All Hands on Deck*. In their day some of these songs must have been rather risqué and would probably not have been heard on the wireless. Billy Comber sings them with gusto and he displays just the right amount of innuendo and double-entendre. There is an art in performing this sort of song which Bobby Comber has down to a tee.

The transfers are excellent, all done by Adrian Tuddenham with his customary expertise. Because these records were so popular and were played so often it is extremely difficult to get good copies of them; but, thanks to Jack Wrigley and Alastair Murray, Adrian had good originals to work from. I have never heard such good results from 8" Broadcasts before. I have one or two originals of the songs transferred here but my copies are rather worn and thanks to Adrian I am able to hear them as they would have sounded when new.

I can thoroughly recommend this cassette, **Poppy Records GXP 003**, and it is well worth the asking price of £5.99. It is available direct from **Poppy Records**, 88 Mount Road, Southdown, Bath, Somerset BA2 1LH. For those who are visually handicapped Poppy Records can offer a version with spoken notes in lieu of written ones. To order this version just add /N to the catalogue number. This is a very useful feature which other record companies should adopt. Full marks to Poppy Records for taking the lead.

Chris Hamilton

REVIEW



Richard Baker Compares Notes

broadcast on BBC Radio 4 at 2.30 Tuesday 15th November 1994

In the last programme of his recent BBC radio series, the popular musical compere made a change from his usual chat with famous musicians, interlarded with records. As the *Radio Times* put it, Richard Baker instead looked into the art of remastering old recordings with Lyndon Jenkins (record industry consultant) and Paul Baily (head of remastering at EMI's Abbey Road studios).

As I have a personal interest in the techniques and results of playing old records, I made a point of catching the repeat of this programme (Saturday 19th November at 11pm), and I feel it worthwhile to make some kind of report on the proceedings. Here I have been able to indicate the original UK 78rpm issues of the recordings discussed. It was more difficult to give references to the reissues and some of the details are informed guesses, as no issue information at all was available during or after the programme; I must thank Chris Hamilton and Tom Going for their help with this.

The programme started with Dennis Brain playing the famous last movement tune from his 1953 recording of Mozart's fourth horn concerto (K495) [Brain/Philharmonia/Karajan: Columbia LP CX1140], now available yet again on CD [EMI CDC 555087-2]. Richard Baker then led us straight into discussion of some of the whys and wherefores of transferring sound from 78s. Metal positives were preferred to shellac for the original copy to tape - then sometimes only a few clicks had to be removed. Obviously, if metal parts were not available, shellac pressings had to be used and then sometimes archives around the world had to be searched for the least crackly pressings. Naturally "other companies" (that is, not EMI) usually had to make do with shellac.

We were then treated to Peter Pears singing *The foggy, foggy dew* from Britten's folk-song settings [Pears/Britten: original UK issue HMV DA1873], on a transfer which had won a *Gramophone* award. The sound on this 1994 reissue was quite clear and natural, with a steady hiss, uncomplicated by any suggestion of untoward tampering [EMI CMS7 6427-2]. The next example was intended to illus-

trate the advance of transfer technique over the years: Delius' *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, recorded in 1927. The first example gave us the original 78 sound (with the usual Hayes crackles) and was really quite good although a little muffled [LSO/Toye: HMV E505]. Then came an old transfer [??], still sounding fairly respectable but somehow rather more antiquated and eliciting the comments that with the removal of surface-noise the musical signal had "begun to be affected adversely" and that it sounded "exactly like a record made in 1927"! Lastly there was a recent transfer [Dutton CDAX 8006], where application of the latest technology made it sound "as if it was made much, much more recently than that." In practice the modern processing resulted in a strangely etiolated and echoing effect, with string tone having a sharp resonance which varied uncomfortably - not a pleasant advertisement for "recent" sound.

Paul Baily then explained the introduction of digital processing, a computerised tool which could remove individual clicks, so that only wide-band noise remained. A "template" could be made from the spectrum of this remaining noise so that it too could be removed, although harmonics of the music could also be "sucked out" if the technique was not used very carefully.

The next demonstration of "before and after" was distinctly undermined by an unwarranted difference in pitch: a dubbing of an original 78 of Artur Rubinstein playing part of the first movement of Chopin's first piano concerto [Rubinstein/LSO/Barbirolli: DB3201/4] alternated with a CD reissue [??EMI CHS7 64933-2]. The 78 was slightly muffled, crackly and well below pitch, but was otherwise basically clean-sounding; in contrast, the CD version had an unpleasantly tinkling piano and horrid boxy string tone mixed with varying amounts of what I can only describe as "grunge." The resulting background noise was quite weird. This version had "really quite a different sound quality," as Richard Baker tactfully pointed out - but nobody took him up on that! Paul Baily explained only how there was "so much that you can do," but that you couldn't make a 1927 recording sound like a 1994 recording. Lyndon Jenkins pointed out that some people liked the surface noise left in, but that it was right to clean up old recordings in rather the same way as "old masters."

The next illustration was a real charmer: an excerpt from Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, recently reissued [Testament SBT 1044] with glorious sound from 1948 [soloists/French Radio Cho and Nat Orch/Bour: Columbia LX1124/9S] - clearly this was another example of minimal processing from metal positives. And so the subject turned to voices and the problems of dealing with vocal recordings - for

this purpose Lyndon Jenkins admitted some legitimacy in transferring these by playing them via a horn gramophone. But Paul Bailey now made a significant and rather surprising statement, which is worth quoting verbatim:

"You do have to be much more careful with voices, because the main thing is that people know how somebody's voice sounds, much more than they know how the LSO used to sound, or something like that - so you do have to be very careful not to affect the voice; which is why, when we're doing recordings which involve famous artists (like Gigli, for instance), we tend to do less processing, so that the voice stays as much as it would have done."

As if to underline the point, we were now given another recently reissued recording [Dutton CDLX 7010] of Gigli himself singing the *Ingemisco* from Verdi's *Requiem*. This was a rather unfortunate affair: the string tone and consonants were suppressed and the words all but lost, and there was a heavy woolly sound to the whole thing - Gigli actually sounded more like a *baritone*! There was distortion in the orchestral sound not on the original 78s, the overall effect was "bumpy" and there was artificial reverberation added to what had started out as really quite a fine clear recording from 1939 [Caniglia/Stignani/Gigli/Pinza/Rome Opera Chorus & Orch/ Serafin: HMV (UK) DB6210/9]. Luckily, in this case, the listeners were not given the chance to make a comparison.

The problem of side-breaks was now discussed: there could be problems with performers slowing down, or with differences of pitch and tonal balance between the end of one side and the start of the next. Sometimes there were even notes missing, which had to be extracted from elsewhere and reinserted. Just to show what could accidentally get passed for publication, we were given an excerpt from Eric Coates conducting his *Three Bears* suite [LSO/Coates: Columbia DX1217], which actually had a four-second gap between the two sides on the 1992 reissue [EMI CDHVM1 (CDP7 99255-2)]. As Lyndon Jenkins observed rather mischievously, it would have been an easy join to make!

After discussion of the problems of piracy, mechanical copyright (currently lasting 50 years after the recording date) and acoustic versus electric recording quality, we then had the opening of *Mars* from Holst's *Planets* suite, in fine 1926 sound, conducted by the composer [LSO/Holst: Columbia L1528R]. This suffered more because of the BBC's current policy of level compression on FM radio than it did at the hands of the competent transfer engineer, who had sensibly left the main background hiss and

overall sound intact, as far as I could judge [EMI CDC7 54837-2].

The last record was from a compilation of the popular singers Dennis Noble and Heddle Nash, and again we were given an alternating comparison of the original (1930) 78 with the CD reissue [Dutton CDLX 7012]. This was the duet (*Ein Souper uns heute winkt*) from *Die Fledermaus* Act I, sung in English as "Come with me" [Columbia DX212]. Here Lyndon Jenkins betrayed an (unspecified) interest in the transfer process - "we had a little trouble with this" he said. And as usual the 78 was crackly but fine. The CD proved to sound rather grainy with somewhat dirty bass (possibly on the original dub before processing) and the vocal timbre was now made to change with pitch which was disconcerting, but I had to agree with Lyndon Jenkins that the orchestra was more easily heard if not actually "so much better."

Altogether, this was quite a gentlemanly introduction to the technical art of playing old records, as practised recently by current major players in the game. Thank goodness, the best was *not* like the worst, and some techniques and results have improved somewhat over the years; but it was clear to me that there are still matters of musical taste which need to be taken into account when considering what sort of processing (and how much) to apply to old recordings. And there remains in my mind the awful warning implied by Paul Bailey, that what the public have never heard, they'll never miss.

Peter Adamson

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REPORTS



London Meeting, November 17th 1994

Further to the illustrated article in *Hillandale News* No.200, October 1994 a clean-shaven Joe Pengelly arrived at Exhibition Road, from Plymouth, to demonstrate tape recordings made of cylinders played on his Mk.3 electrical cylinder player.

The disappointment felt by those of the capacity audience who had expected a live demonstration of this cylinder player, was alleviated somewhat by the large array of open-reel tape recorders, cassette players and video players and the variety of rare recordings to be heard.

Initially, for comparison purposes, we heard three Blue Amberols recorded on his Mk.1 machine (an illustration of which was circulated amongst the audience). This machine had a playing arm pivoted on what appeared to be a crane support bracket.

Ted Kendall, one of the National Sound Archive experts, dealt with spools of high speed open-reel tape, which demonstrated the improvements of the Mk.3 machine, which Joe termed "universal" and so it proved to be. Blue Amberol 1508 *Light a Feather* (Charles Daab) got us onto a good start.

Then we heard a cassette recording of Joe himself, singing. This recording had been transferred acoustically by Messrs Miller, Morris & Co., of Exeter onto a 2-minute wax cylinder and then reproduced. There was an obvious lack of volume, but nevertheless a forward rounded sound came over.

Next demonstrated was a No.4 Lioret cylinder. This looked about the same size as usual, but extremely unusual for 1900 it was a moulded celluloid cylinder. It had an untapered brass sleeve. The song announced as *Polka des Englishes* (sic) was an anti-British song with band accompaniment, complete with applause and cheering towards the end of the song. This cylinder was examined with great interest by many members of the audience.

The next item was a pink Lambert No.939, the American Quartet singing *In the good old Summer Time*. These distinctive indestructible cylinders had only one disadvantage - there was no internal strengthening core. This was followed cylinder from the problematical 4-min wax Amberol series. This was Edison Amberol 725 with Ada Jones singing *All Alone*.

Joe then told us of a cylinder, which he had originally thought was a shop dummy, but later turned out to be a Kinetophone cylinder from about 1913. Edison, who had provided sound with his moving pictures from around 1900, developed these large cylinders for short films he made in the Edwardian era. This cylinder was part 2 of the Ohio Minstrels. Society and film buff, Paul Collenette, pointed out that the movie camera could be heard to start and then run during the recording!

We next listened to and watched part of a thirty-minute BBC Southwest documentary, made to commemorate the Centenary of Recorded Sound. We saw machines from Tin Foil phonographs onwards and we saw Joe appearing in a re-creation of his family's Gramophone and Cycle Shop, complete with machines and an all black enamel looped framed ladies bicycle.

The evening concluded with Joe's links with Royalty: visits to a tower at Windsor Castle to transcribe archive material - a snippet of which we were allowed to hear. This was the Emperor Menelik's reply to Queen Victoria's cylinder of 1899. This was apparently a public recording, illustrated in the *Punch* magazine and Joe said background noises could be heard in addition to the speaker.

So concluded a very interesting evening, given to a full house. Many of the audience would have kept talking well into the small hours if the security personnel permitted them! The Society is indebted to Joe Pengelly for devoting much of his time to come and share the results of his research with us in such an informative and enjoyable manner.

George Woolford

London Meeting, December 15th 1994

Christmas always puts our members into a holiday mood, so our December meeting was once again given over to a members night. Each member was asked to bring along a recording on the theme of *Relations*.

We all have them, so to speak, and artists like Harry Hemsley, Walter Glynn, Stanley Holloway and Jack Hylton kept us in good form.

Later, somewhat fortified by with sherry, mince pies and pieces of cake (supplied by Len Watts) we listened to Malcolm McEachern singing *Grandfather's Clock* followed by Caruso and Ancona sing *Au Fond du Temple Saint* from Bizet's *Pearl Fishers*, thus providing us with a very festive atmosphere. Timothy Massey played two privately recorded items by the bass Rodney Williams, Beeley's *The Second Minuet* and Bastow's *Galloping Major* - outstanding singing to conclude an enjoyable evening.

George Woolford

Midland Group Meeting at Carr's Lane Methodist Centre, Birmingham on November 19th 1994

This was our final meeting for 1994. Two of our long-standing stalwarts Roger Preston and John Stroud gave us programmes.

Roger took the floor for the first part of the evening when he talked about *Things I have collected*. Roger pointed out that we were not to be confronted with quantities of gramophonic hardware, but music and spoken word on tape, of items which have attracted him over the years.

The first item to be heard was a 1906 Edison extolling the virtues of the phonograph. This was aimed mainly at the American market. Roger next played Caruso singing an aria from Massenet's *Manon* an item originally broadcast on Singer's Choice, a radio programme. Other serious vocalists played by Roger were Alfred Piccaver and Fritz Wunderlich (who Roger saw at the Stuttgart Opera House).

On the comedy side we heard an after-dinner speech by an Air Traffic Controller from Birmingham Airport. The speaker spoke of landing an aeroplane. (He said that the best pilots are those who make the same number of landings as take-offs)

From another Radio Birmingham programme we heard our Chairman, Eddie Dunn interviewing Paul Sousa on early singers on record. From another BBC programme entitled *The Centenary of the Talking Machine* we heard The Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria in a 1915 recording and *A Little Bit of What You Fancy* sung by Marie Lloyd.

These were the highlights of a delightfully varied programme which was warmly appreciated by all present.

After breaking off for coffee and tea we returned to listen to John Stroud giving us a programme entitled *Unusual Records*. John's musical tastes are mainly on the comedy side, and most of what he played us was in this vein. He used a brass horn gramophone, an electric record player and a cassette tape machine to give us a variety of comedy styles including Leslie Sarony, Rob Wilton, Dorrie Dene, Gilbert Harding and Florence Desmond amongst others.

He commenced with Donald Peers singing *Get out those Old Records*. No one seemed to know this item, which is surprising as it was from the 1950s. Leslie Sarony seemed to dwell on the morbid as heard no less than three songs on the subject of death, *Ain't it grand to be bloomin' well dead*, *Box the undertaker* and *Why build a wall round a graveyard?* The Rob Wilton extract was taken from a BBC record and was not the usual commercial issue of *The Day War broke out*. We then heard a Philips advertising tape full of technical jargon and then came the famous record of Amy Johnson talking of her solo flight to Australia in 1930 and Florrie Desmond's skit entitled *A British Mother's Big Flight*.

John's final offering was Flanders and Swan on the subject of Hi-Fidelity. Another well-received programme and our sincere thanks go to Roger and John for entertaining us so well.

Geoff Howl

Northern Group AGM held on December 4th 1995, at Mirfield near Leeds

At the AGM of the Northern Group, held on December 4th 1995 the following were elected to the Committee:

Chairman: Mr L. Miles Mallinson

Secretary: Mrs Ann Mallinson,

Cumbria LA13 0HU

Tel: [REDACTED]

Treasurer: Mr Paul Hebden,

Middleton,
Leeds LS10 3SS

Vice-Chairman: Mr John Astin,

[REDACTED]
Bilton,
Harrogate GH1 3LL

At the meeting it was agreed to move the meeting venues more towards the north-west, as many members are situated in that area, making it more convenient for them. It was also decided to reduce the number of meetings in the year to five. They were to be held in March, May, July, September and November thus avoiding the worst of the weather conditions.

The retiring committee members, Philip Broomhead, Chairman, and Mrs Margaret Hebden, Secretary were thanked for the work they had done for the group over the years.

The first meeting of the new season will be a talk by Mr Derek Fisher on the subject of George Formby. This will be illustrated with original 78 records from his own collection. These will be played on Miles Mallinson's E.M.G. Mk.10a. The meeting will be held at Wigan Pier on 19th March (Sunday) commencing at 2pm. The cost will be £1 per head (to cover the hire of the room). Refreshments will be available, so "come on" members and prospective members, let's make this a real good start to the season. Please contact the Secretary first to book your seat as there is limited space in the lecture room at the pier.

The rest of the meetings are as follows:

May 21st (Sunday)	Steam Boat Picnic, with portable gramophones. Details later.
16th July (Sunday)	The Barrow meeting at Ann and Miles Mallinson's home, where a "concours d'élégance" for Gramophones and Phonographs will be held.
September 17th (Sunday)	Armley Mills Museum, Leeds. Programme details later.
November 19th	AGM - Venue to be arranged.

Any one interested in joining the Northern Group please contact the secretary. They will be made most welcome. There is no joining fee, but the annual subscription has been raised from £2.50 to £3.

Well I always felt I couldn't beat 'em; so I've joined them!

Ann Mallinson

Frank Hurlock - A Personal Memorial

It is with regret that I have to report the sudden death, on 5th November 1994, of Honorary Member Frank Hurlock. He was 68, and will be sadly missed by a legion of friends and acquaintances both inside and outside of the Society.

My earliest memory of Frank was about 40 years ago when my father (Roy) introduced me to the world of jazz. He and Frank had already been friends for some years and spent hours together "junkshopping" for records and being involved in the early Rhythm Clubs and record research. At that time Frank ran the House of Wax record shop in Portsmouth, which was an ideal place for me to start my collection. In no time I had joined the Jazz Appreciation Society which held record recitals at the shop. Subsequently at this venue we started to "mess around" with a spasm band which consisted of toy and home-made instruments (apart from a guitar) and was a revival of what my father and Frank had done years previously on Riverboat Shuffles etc. We became competent enough to play semi-professionally in local pubs and clubs, but nobody gave up their day jobs! We called ourselves Celestial City Blue Blowers and our main claim to fame was to come second in a local talent competition which was judged by veteran trumpeter Nat Gonella. Although he liked the music he gave first place to a pop group because, in fairness, they wore uniforms! Frank played kazoo and trumpet mouthpiece - yes, just the mouthpiece!

Frank was a competent performer on trumpet and brass bass with several jazz bands, including his own, but his real expertise was his knowledge of records. In the early 1970s the Portsmouth Jazz Society was formed, which reverted to the record recital format although subsequently the PJS Concert Club presented many fine jazz musicians in concert. In 1975 Frank opened his Collectors Room above Orpheus Records in Southsea and this survived until 1989. During this period he issued Connoisseur Cassettes which presented many rare and varied recordings of vintage music.

Frank introduced me to C.L.P.G.S. in 1988, by which time he had assembled a fine collection of phonographs and gramophones to go with his thousands of 78s. In that context he was involved with several exhibitions in association with local museums.

I last visited Frank a few weeks ago to collect an HMV 1A hornless gramophone I had purchased from his collection.. I had not seen him for some time but all the old enthusiasm, knowledge and generosity was still intact. He proudly demonstrated his recently restored Edison Fireside complete with cylinder cabinet. He promised to send me some record covers when he could sort them out. A parcel and letter duly arrived three days before he died. I replied the next day but sadly he died before receiving the letter.

In his letter he told me that he was about to present a recital to the Portsmouth Jazz Society entitled The Last Jam Session. How ironic that this would prove to be true.

A. J. Voysey

UNDER THE HAMMER



Watford Auctions, Sunday 23rd October 1994

The Inaugural Special Collectors sale held by Old Harlequin Sales at Watford Auctions on 23rd October 1994 was a great success with collectors and dealers alike. It was well attended by many people including several C.L.P.G.S. members, who had travelled from many parts of the country.

A first was achieved, in the UK at auction, by the sale of a rare Edison Red Gem Phonograph Model A, which attracted £1,200. A Wurlitzer Juke-Box sold for £2,600, whilst a leather cased Camera-Phone with a tortoise-shell resonator fetched 3250. Edison Standards and Gems reached £200 to £300, an Amberola 50 reached

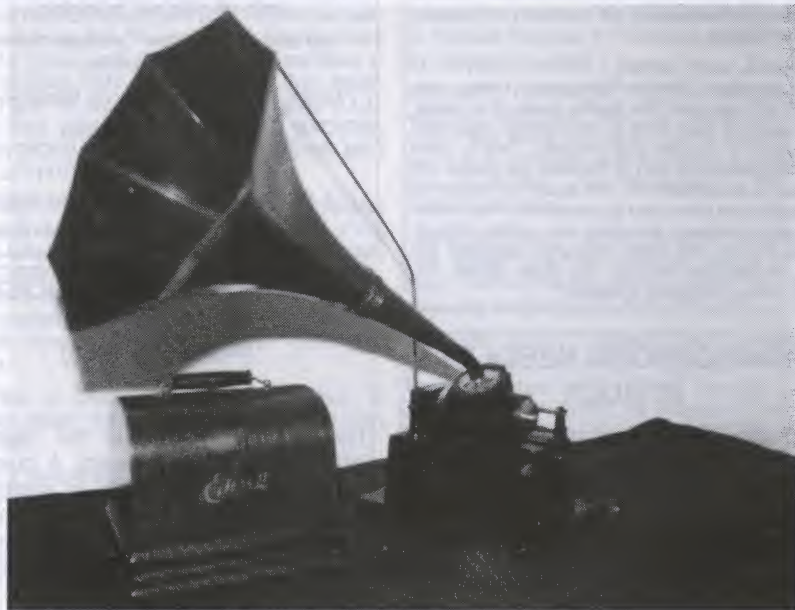
£590 and an HMV 163 Re-entrant Gramophone made £390. The surprise of the auction was the price of £320, paid by a Devon-based collector for a collection of needle tins. All seemed pleased by the warm friendly atmosphere and professionalism of the rooms.

Some of the "bigger" boys were seen amongst the punters, with perhaps a view to surveying the new opposition in this specialised field, but they also seemed surprised by the variety of lots that had been assembled for the sale.

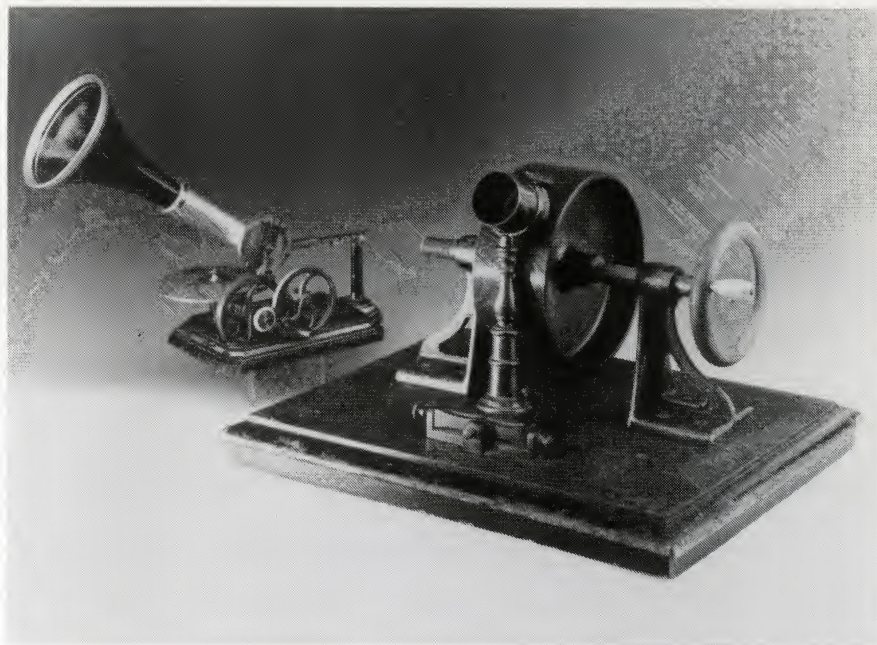
As one pleased collector had remarked "There was something for everyone, the dealer, the collector and the seller. It goes to show that you don't have to travel to the major London auction houses to find quality".

The success of this auction has enabled us to hold another in March 1995. Our thanks are due to all members of C.L.P.G.S. who attended and had an enjoyable day. We will be delighted to accept items for inclusion in our next sale.

M. W. B.



The Edison Red Gem Phonograph Model E that sold for £1,200



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